

Message Text

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EXDIS FOR CHARGE FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, XF, US

SUBJECT: RESPONSES TO BEGIN'S QUESTIONS RE IDF WITH-
DRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON

REF: JERUSALEM 764

1. WHEN YOU NEXT SEE PRIME MINISTER BEGIN, YOU MAY CON-
VEY TO HIM THE FOLLOWING CLARIFICATIONS IN RESPONSE
TO THE QUESTIONS HE RAISED WITH YOU (PARA 7 REFTTEL):

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A. IS THE U.S. ASKING THAT ISRAELI FORCES WITHDRAW
FROM LEBANON BEFORE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO
PREVENT THE RETURN OF PALESTINIAN GUERRILLAS TO THE
AREA? OR WILL THE TIME PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTING ANY
RESOLUTION CALLING FOR WITHDRAWAL BE USED TO PRODUCE
SUCH ARRANGEMENTS?

--WHAT WE ARE ASKING IS THAT ISRAEL ANNOUNCE THAT IT WILL WITHDRAW ITS FORCES FROM LEBANON WITHOUT ATTACHING ANY CONDITIONS TO THIS ANNOUNCEMENT. WE BELIEVE THIS IS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE A FAVORABLE SITUATION FOR OUR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A SATISFACTORY RESULT IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL. IN THE COURSE OF DISCUSSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS

IN NEW YORK, WE WILL WORK FOR EXPEDITIOUS AGREEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A UN FORCE WITH THE AIM OF AVOIDING THE KIND OF TIME GAP BETWEEN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND THE ENTRY OF UN UNITS THAT WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR PALESTINIAN FORCES TO REOCCUPY THE AREA. WE WILL ALSO DISCUSS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON AGAIN THE EXTENSION OF ITS AUTHORITY TO THIS AREA AND THE INTRODUCTION OF LEBANESE FORCES. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, HOWEVER, IF THIS PROVES UNMANAGEABLE, WE BELIEVE THAT THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF ISRAELI FORCES CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED. IN ANY EVENT, WE ASSUME THAT ISRAEL COULD

PUT INDIGENOUS FORCES IN A POSITION TO HOLD KEY POSITIONS UNTIL OTHER FORCES CAN HELP THEM.

B. DOES THE U.S. SHARE THE ISRAELI ASSUMPTION THAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD RETURN IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH ARRANGEMENTS?

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--WE AGREE THAT THIS IS A REASONABLE LONGER-TERM ASSUMPTION ALTHOUGH IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THEY WOULD HESITATE TO MOVE BACK TO BORDER AREA IMMEDIATELY, HAVING EXPERIENCED ISRAELI MILITARY STRENGTH AND KNOWING THEIR RETURN COULD LEAD TO A REPETITION THEREOF. WE ALSO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, IF IT FINALLY COMES TO A CHOICE BETWEEN RISKING THE RETURN OF PALESTINIANS TO THE BORDER AREA AND JEOPARDIZING THE PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUATION OF THE PEACE PROCESS, THAT THE ONLY POSSIBLE CHOICE MUST BE TO DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO KEEP THE PEACE PROCESS GOING. WE ARE FULLY AWARE OF HOW AGONIZING A CHOICE THIS WOULD BE FOR ISRAEL AND HOPE THAT THIS MATTER CAN BE WORKED OUT IN A WAY THAT WILL NOT REQUIRE THIS KIND OF WORST-CASE DECISION. THE FACT IS, HOWEVER, THAT EVEN THE MOST SECURE BUFFER STRIP ALONG THE BORDER CANNOT ELIMINATE TERRORIST THREATS; FOR EXAMPLE, LAST SATURDAY'S ATTACK IN ISRAEL DID NOT COME FROM THE BORDER AREA AND PRESUMABLY WOULD HAVE HAPPENED EVEN IF THE BORDER WITH LEBANON HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY SEALED OFF. IN FINAL ANALYSIS, THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION TO THIS KIND

OF THREAT IS MEANINGFUL PROGRESS TOWARDS A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT, AND THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT STILL OFFER THE BEST PROSPECT FOR SUCH PROGRESS. IT WOULD BE TRAGIC, IN OUR VIEW, IF THOSE NEGOTIATIONS WERE TO DIE OUT BECAUSE PROTRACTED ISRAELI PRESENCE ON LEBANESE TERRITORY, WHATEVER SHORT-TERM SECURITY IT MIGHT AFFORD, MADE IT POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR

SADAT TO CONTINUE THE NEGOTIATIONS.

C. CAN A UN FORCE PREVENT FATAH FROM RETURNING AND DOES THE U.S. ENVISAGE AN ACTIVE OR A PASSIVE FORCE?

--WE WOULD PREFER AN ACTIVE UN FORCE BUT AT THIS
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POINT IT IS TOO EARLY TO PREDICT WHAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE. FOR OUR PART, WE WILL WORK FOR A MANDATE THAT WILL GIVE IT BOTH THE SIZE AND THE SCOPE TO KEEP THE BUFFER AREA CLEAR OF ALL EXCEPT AUTHORIZED LEBANESE GOVERNMENT MILITARY AND SECURITY FORCES UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT CAN ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITIES IN SOUTH LEBANON.

2. YOU CAN ALSO DRAW UPON SEPTTEL TITLED "PROPOSED UNSC ACTION ON MIDDLE EAST" TO EXPLAIN WHAT WE WILL BE DOING IN UN VANCE

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